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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 29 September 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Aliyev ..... (Azerbaijan)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Organization of work (A/C.4/60/1; A/C.4/60/L.1)

1. **The Chairman** drew the attention of the Committee to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly contained in the report of the General Committee (A/60/250) regarding the work of the Main Committees, including those contained in General Assembly decision 34/401 and resolutions 58/126 and 58/316. In order to make full use of the time and conference services made available to the Committee, he intended to convene and adjourn the Committee's meetings promptly, hoped that all delegations would extend their cooperation and support. In that connection, he indicated that he would convene a meeting only when there were sufficient speakers on the list for that meeting. He recalled that the Assembly had decided to continue its practice during the current session of departing from the rule that one quarter of the members must be present for a Main Committee meeting to be declared open and debate to begin.

2. On the basis of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 49/221 B, he suggested that statements by members of the Committee during the general debate should not exceed 10 minutes, or 15 minutes in the case of those speaking on behalf of several delegations.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. **The Chairman** said that, in line with the time limits for explanations of vote and rights of reply, points of order should be limited to five minutes. He also recalled paragraph 17 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby concluding statements could be made only by presiding officers.

5. With respect to resolutions, he drew attention to paragraph 32 of decision 34/401 and to recommendation 3 (f) of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts (A/41/49). In that connection, and in accordance with paragraph 5 of its resolution 48/264, the General Assembly had encouraged Member States to exercise restraint in making proposals requesting new reports of the Secretary-General, and in paragraph 69 of its resolution 57/270 B, it had requested that resolutions should be short and should focus more on action-oriented operative paragraphs.

6. With regard to programme budget implications and rule 153 of the rules of procedure, he noted that the General Assembly had drawn the attention of the Committee to paragraph 12 of its decision 34/401, which stated that it was imperative for the Main Committees to allow sufficient time for the preparation of the estimate of expenditures by the Secretariat and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. The Assembly had also decided that a minimum period of 48 hours should be allowed between the submission of a proposal and a vote on it involving expenditure. That period would allow the Secretary-General to prepare and present the related statement of administrative and financial implications and would help avoid the cancellation of meetings and the postponement of consideration of items.

7. He drew attention to document A/C.4/60/1, which contained a letter dated 21 September 2005, addressed to him from the President of the General Assembly, informing him that at its 17th plenary meeting the Assembly had decided to allocate 14 items to the Committee for its consideration, and document A/C.4/60/L.1, which contained the Committee's programme of work with a proposed timetable. He also drew attention to paragraph 3 (b) of section C of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, according to which the Committee would, at the end of the session, adopt a provisional programme of work for the next session. The Committee had held a number of formal and informal consultations on the issue of revitalization, as a result of which a non-paper had been approved and transmitted to the President of the General Assembly in March 2005; the issue would be discussed by the ad hoc working group established by the Assembly under resolution 59/313. In accordance with the decisions taken in connection with the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, particularly resolutions 56/509 and 58/126, the Committee would deal with agenda item 5 about three months before the next session.

8. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the programme of work and the timetable contained in document A/C.4/60/L.1.

9. *It was so decided.*

10. **The Chairman** said that, as at previous sessions, the Committee would set up a working group of the whole to prepare draft resolutions for submission under

item 29 ("International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space"). It was his understanding that the working group would be chaired by the Nigerian delegation. He took it that the Committee agreed to establish the group.

11. *It was so decided.*

12. **The Chairman** noted that, in approving its programme of work and timetable, the Committee had decided to hold one general debate covering all agenda items relating to decolonization, namely items 26, 34, 35, 36 and 37. That decision would enable Committee members to speak on any or all of the agenda items at any meeting devoted to the topic. He suggested that the deadline for submission of the draft proposals on the aforementioned decolonization agenda items should be set for Thursday, 6 October 2005, at 4 p.m.

13. *It was so decided.*

Requests for hearings (aide-mémoire 1/05)

14. **The Chairman** drew attention to aide-mémoire 1/05, which contained 49 requests for hearings on the questions of Gibraltar, Guam, New Caledonia and Western Sahara under agenda item 26. He suggested that the requests should be circulated as Committee documents for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

15. *It was so decided.*

16. **The Chairman** said that he had also received communications from the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, who wished to make a statement on the subject of Gibraltar under agenda item 26, and from a representative of the Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, who wished to make a statement under agenda item 36. The statements would be scheduled accordingly.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.